

/423 cont./

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very irregular teeth are still firm in the short, narrow upper jaw (199).

100. Hyades (q:363) confirms this very emphatically.

[32]

The other comb must be specially made and that is why not everyone has it. It is a flat piece of whale bone, the size



Fig. 19. Comb Made of
Whale Bone. Two-thirds
natural size.

of a child's hand, into which five to eight teeth are cut. The teeth project across the entire piece, with not very large spaces between them (Fig. 19). This is in contrast to the comb of the Salk'tam (Vol. I, 212). In the central Yemena region where porpoises are raised, this tunakikamek is generally used (101). [Fig. 19 appears here.]

101. Lothrop (b:131) mentions both types and says: "The Yahgan sometimes comb their hair" /cited in English/. Hyades (q:348) does not mention the last comb we

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- 301 Finally, they create a popular oddity by alternating a small piece of black bone and a small piece of white. They also have ornamental chains consisting only of small black pieces. They blacken them by saturating them with fish oil and leaving them in hot ashes for some time. The latter varieties are all known as hatus (118).

118. Hyades (q): 349 mentions only one of these types: "One type of necklace very commonly worn consists of small cylinders of bird bone, evenly cut and strung" /translated from French/. One does see this type very often, as a matter of fact.

- 301 The ornament for the neck that is considered the most beautiful is uspuka. To make it they gather pea-sized shells of Phorinula violacea, known as son uspuka. They scrape off the rough and dirty calcareous surface layer by rubbing the shells with wet sand between both hands or by placing them in the pebbles on the edge of a shallow brook that has a strong current, which produces the same scouring action. This gives the little snail shells a faint opalescent sheen on a sky-blue or light pink background. They make a small hole near the outer edge by rubbing the snail shell on a rough stone. First they place all the little shells next to each other according to size, beginning with the smallest up to the largest, but from the beginning they choose them so that the difference in size between the two extremes is very slight. To string them they need a cord, asina, braided with three tendon fibers and laid double (Fig. 23). They thread the lower strand through the hole of each small shell and secure the upper one with a thread running spirally around the two and pressing each individual shell tight against the preceding one (Fig. 24). This ornament /436/ is arranged in two to five equal circles, depending on its length. At one point a short thread is wrapped around all the circles to keep them together. This is the way the uspuka is worn at the neck. If they decide to make only a single strand of snail shells, they put the largest one in the center and arrange the others very accurately according to size, so that the smallest ones finish off the two ends (119).

119. This characteristic ornament of the Yamana, [text continues on p. 105, Anal. 4]

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In July, 1923, I asked old Walter to tell me exactly how the shafts for harpoons and spears were made in former times. He invited me to take a walk through the nearby forest at Punta Remolino. My faithful friend and dependable guide, the Selk'nam Indian Toin (Vol. I, 116) also joined us. Walter examined many beech trees with a sharp eye, and it took some time until he finally decided to cut down a suitable one. He used an iron ax, but showed both of us the former procedure which was incomparably more arduous. On our way home he emphasized several times that only the piece he had cut out had the required characteristics, and that the shaft must vibrate well when grasped in the middle. If one chooses other layers of wood, he has to worry about the shaft's bending or warping after repeatedly becoming wet.

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/472/ The other part of this harpoon is the bone point with a single large tooth. For this one selects that portion of a whale rib that has the least curvature. The superfluous ends are taken off with sandstone by a long filing process (177). The piece of bone

177. Nowadays they use iron tools. Despard observed that with regard to the whalebone the Yamana "chop with axe, then cut with knife, then scrape with muscle /sic/ shell, then burnish with smooth stone" (VP:VI, 52; 1859) /cited in English/.

is shaped by pushing it back and forth with light pressure over a flat sandstone. When the curved edge of the back and the upper point are finished, a notch about ten centimeters long is cut into the lower third. This notch must then be finished off with a barb pointing downward. The whole process is nothing more than /Fig. 34 appears here/ endless grinding and filing with narrow pieces of sandstone and pumice. It requires a long time and much patience, for the bone tissue is extremely hard. The lower end, a rectangle about six centimeters long and three centimeters wide, is wedge-shaped. The sides of this tang are purposely left somewhat uneven so that it will fit more securely into the notch. A length of about 22 to 40 centimeters and a width of about 36 millimeters are the measurements most frequently observed for

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these large bone points of the small harpoon. Sometimes one of them will turn out somewhat unsymmetrical or bent to one side when the natural curvature of the whale rib could not be completely obliterated by grinding. The lower /472/ jawbone, isaka, of the whale is most highly prized. It can be made into a very hard and quite symmetrical point which also has a more accurate aim (178).

178. Bridges (k):14 mentions: "Points for lances are made from the jaw of the whale" /translated from Spanish/. On the subject

[322]



Fig. 34. Diagram Showing How a Shaft is Cut Out.

of making harpoon points, Hyades (q):355 makes the more general statement that "the Fuegians use a bone of the whale or sometimes a seal bone, but the bones of whale are preferred" /translated from French/. Earlier Snow (a):II, 361 reported: "Their principal spear-heads are entirely constructed of hard bone, and are about seven inches long, finely pointed, with a barb on one side four inches from the point" /cited in English/.

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Our Yamana use spears as lighter throwing weapons. We can distinguish between a spear used for birds and one for fish. The shaft of the former is likewise a pole that is uniformly cut and prepared, but this is usually a young trunk of Lathyrus magellanica or of Neodaphne or Drimys winteri, from which the bark has been peeled off. It is usually not more than three meters long. The thick end is cut off straight across. Here the notch is cut from one side without letting it come through to the other side. About a quarter of the diameter remains, and this serves to support the bone point which is inserted here with the back against the remaining portion of the wood. The lower part of the point has several short upright teeth. A narrow strap is tightly wound around it in the spaces between the teeth. The same shaft with the partial notch just described is also used for the filloways, securely and firmly held in it.

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/K2/ The serrated points made of bone or wood are characteristic for these spears. For the bone teeth, whale ribs are used exclusively. They are first treated with coarse sandstone, then with quartz splinters or mussel shells, and finally furnished with pumice. The two edges end in a point at the top, the back is rounded off (182).

[71]

182. It cannot be definitely determined whether the Yamana made a bone point with both edges serrated. However, EO:64 mentions: "auis, 'the single or double notched spear head used for seals, penguins' (cited in English). Among the Halakwalap I found the double-edged, serrated spearhead of wood, as well as of bone, and sometimes even the two together.

and on the opposite side the natives laboriously cut or saw out one little tooth after another with sharp mussel shells or quartz splinters. These small teeth are narrow and more or less irregular; they are close together and point obliquely downward. The little piece at the lower end is irregularly serrated and tapers. It is set into the notch and lashed.

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This spear with the bone point is used for hunting birds. It is most often hurled against penguins which have tough flesh into which a wooden point would not penetrate deeply enough.

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The wedge we have just described is carved out of the strong tissue of the large bones of the whale. The process is one of rubbing back and forth with pressure on a flat stone. As soon as the desired form roughly appears, the blade is carefully sharpened. The last thing is to grind and smooth the surface. For this a /400/ pumice about the size of one's fist is suitable. The sea washes these up in many places along the shore. We have repeatedly emphasized that our Indians must often resort to pumice, hiyal, for this very useful material is the only thing they employ to polish their bone points for harpoons and spears and their many wooden shafts. Lothrop (S):143 mentions: "For polishing, in place of our sandpaper or the One for skin and grill, the Tahitians use pumice hiyal" /cited in English/. BD:367 spells it hiyal. The pumice, of course, soon wears down on the hard bone tissue, but it can be picked up anywhere on the shore (117). The folk name

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110. Lothrop (S):143 confirms: "It frequently floats down Beagle channel and may be picked up on the beach" /cited in English/. Lothrop (S):137 is wrong in saying that pumice is found only off Murua Island and Lemoa Island.

(Vol. I, 138), as we know, not infrequently use the same pumice.

E. Use of Iron

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The Tamana of the first and oldest period were completely unfamiliar with the utilization of iron in any form. It is not found in their country nor could they obtain it through barter. As soon as they saw it on European ships and realized its usefulness, however, they learned how to obtain this raw material, as well as small plates of steel and copper, either legitimately or by stealing. Their insatiable desire for it sometimes led to dire consequences for themselves.

It is surprising how quickly they made iron serve them, taking it over in the form of nails, small plates for sheathing, and

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Fig. 54. Long Bone Points.

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this fact: "It is rather curious that usually each of these natives is trained to a particular pursuit: thus, one becomes an adept with the spear; another with the sling; another with a bow and arrows; but this excellence in one line does not hinder their attaining a considerable proficiency in all the others" /cited in English/. This is actually the case.

A person who lacks something that he is unable to make because of a shortage of raw material or as a result of his own incapacity acquires it through barter with someone who happens to be in a position to dispose of it. For example, only a few men are completely successful in cutting and filing the long bone harpoon points (Fig. 54), in putting an arrow together, or in removing a wide sheet of bark for canoe building. It is inevitable that the individual will sometimes become dependent on others to a certain extent when he must fill his need for certain implements. This considerably strengthens the awareness of the solidarity of all members of the tribe.

To begin with, however, scarcely anyone would think of using the object which he happens to have for purposes of barter, since in all his work and striving he is primarily and fundamentally concerned with his own needs. He uses his own measurements as a basis. That is to say, he decides on the length and